

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SY-05 USSS-00 PER-01 A-01 FBO-02 OC-05 CCO-00

SCS-03 SCA-01 /091 W

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R 241005Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4592

INFO AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MASERU

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, WA, SF

SUBJECT: NAMIBIA: SHOOTING INCIDENT AT KATATURA

1. OUTBREAK OF VIOLENCE AT WINDHOEK'S KATATURA TOWNSHIP
APRIL 23 ENDED WITH ONE OVAMBO WORKER DEAD, TEN WOUNDED, AND
CONSIDERABLE PROPERTY DAMAGE.

2. POLICE VERSION, RELEASED IN PARLIAMENT YESTERDAY BY
MINPOLICE J.T. KRUGER, SAID SHOOTING INCIDENT TOOK PLACE
AFTER MUNICIPAL POLICE HAD INSTITUTED A PRE-DAWN SEARCH FOR
ILLEGAL RESIDENTS IN OVAMBO WORKERS' COMPOUND. ACCORDING TO
WINDHOEK'S MUNICIPAL CLERK, VAGRANTS IN COMPOUND HAD BEEN
INSTIGATING WORKERS TO STRIKE.

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3. KRUGER SAID THAT ON MORNING OF APRIL 23 A FORCE OF

THIRTY-TWO WHITE AND BLACK MUNICIPAL POLICEMEN TOOK UP POSITIONS OUTSIDE COMPOUND TO CHECK DOCUMENTS OF PEOPLE LEAVING. WHILE CHECK WAS BEING MADE, SOME MEN ALLEGEDLY TRIED TO ESCAPE THROUGH OPEN DOORS OF COMPOUND. GATES WERE CLOSED AND SEVERAL SOUTH AFRICAN POLICEMEN WERE CALLED TO SCENE. THEY GATHERED WITH MUNICIPAL POLICE IN MUNICIPAL OFFICES INSIDE THE COMPOUND. STONE-THROWING BEGAN IN EARNEST. POLICE SAY THAT WHEN WORKERS CHARGED THE OFFICES AND ATTACKED IT WITH STONES, THEY REALIZED THEIR LIVES WERE IN DANGER AND FIRED UPON ATTACKERS, WHO THEN FLED.

4. RELIABLE SOURCE IN WINDHOEK HAS TOLD US THAT BLACKS HAVE SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT VERSION. THEY CHARGED THAT MUNICIPAL POLICE HAD COME TO COMPOUND IN EARLY HOURS OF MORNING AND HAD BEGUN HAULING PEOPLE OUT OF BED TO ARREST THEM FOR NON-POSSESSION OF DOCUMENTS. THIS, BLACKS SAY, WAS CAUSE OF BITTERNESS WHICH LED THEM TO RIOT.

5. WINDHOEK SOURCE SAYS SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE REINFORCEMENTS HAVE BEEN FLOWN IN FROM REPUBLIC, AND ARE NOW PATROLING THE STREETS OF KATATURA. THERE HAVE BEEN NO FURTHER INCIDENTS.

6. COMMENT: OVAMBO WORKERS' COMPOUND IN KATATURA IS PRISON-LIKE STRUCTURE HOUSING OVER FIVE THOUSAND MEN. POOR LIVING CONDITIONS THERE FREQUENT RAIDS BY POLICE, AND FACT THAT FIVE THOUSAND WOMENLESS MEN ARE SHUT UP INSIDE COMPOUND EVERY NIGHT ARE FACTORS WHICH HAVE LED TO OUTBREAKS OF VIOLENCE BEFORE. UNLESS CONDITIONS VASTLY IMPROVE, ANGER AND BITTERNESS WILL PERSIST AND POTENTIAL FOR VIOLENCE WILL REMAIN. THIS LATEST OF A LONG SERIES OF OUTBREAKS OF TROUBLE AT KATATURA IS LIKELY TO BE TAKEN ABROAD AS YET ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF SOUTH AFRICA'S MISRULE OF NAMIBIA.
EDMONDSON

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